

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2756
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
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AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 NEW DELHI 10721

EXDIS HANDLE AS NODIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, AF, IN, PK, US
SUBJECT: UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM'S MEETING WITH
PRIME MINISTER DESAI

1. UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM, ACCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR GOHEEN AND DEPTOFF, MET FOR FORTY-FIVE MINUTES WITH PRIME MINISTER DESAI JULY 12. MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS VAJPAYEE, FOREIGN SECRETARY MEHTA AND PRINCIPAL SECRETARY TO THE PRIME MINISTER SHANKAR ALSO PRESENT.

2. NEWSOM OPENED MEETING BY EXPLAINING THAT AT THE REQUEST OF SECRETARY VANCE HE WAS VISITING IRAN, INDIA, AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN AND SAUDI ARABIA TO SHARE VIEWS WITH LEADERS OF THE REGION. HE HAD THREE PRINCIPAL PURPOSES DURING HIS TALKS IN THE REGION: (A) CONTINUING THE CLOSE CONSULTATIONS WITH THE GOI PREVIOUSLY DEMONSTRATED BY THE TWO MEETINGS BETWEEN PRESIDENT CARTER AND THE PRIME MINISTER; (B) EXAMINING THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN IN ORDER TO ASSESS WHAT U.S. POLICY SHOULD BE TOWARD THE NEW AFGHAN REGIME; AND (C) VISITING THOSE COUN-
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TRIES INTERESTED IN STABILITY AND PEACE IN THE REGION TO LEARN HOW THE U.S. CAN CONTRIBUTE TO REGIONAL STABILITY. IN THIS CONNECTION, HE SAID HE WOULD SEE WHETHER THERE IS A WAY FOR PAKISTAN TO SUSPEND ITS PLANS FOR A REPROCESSING CAPABILITY SO THAT THE US CAN RESUME ITS ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.

2. NEWSOM ASSURED THE PRIME MINISTER THAT IF THE US RESUMES

ITS PROGRAMS FOR PAKISTAN, IT WILL BE DONE IN A WAY WHICH WILL NOT ESCALATE THE LEVEL OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT IN THE REGION. AS HE HAD EXPLAINED DURING HIS EARLIER CALL ON DEFENSE MINISTER RAM, IF PAKISTAN CAN BE CONVINCED TO SUSPEND THE REPROCESSING PLANT, THE US ANTICIPATES IT MAY RECEIVE FROM PAKISTAN REQUESTS FOR F-5 AIRCRAFT AND SOME OTHER EQUIPMENT. IN SUCH CASE, THE US WOULD CONSIDER SALES AND POSSIBLY SOME CREDITS, BUT NO GRANTS. ANY U.S. ARMS PROGRAMS FOR PAKISTAN WOULD BE RESTRAINED, AS PRESIDENT CARTER HAD TOLD THE PRIME MINISTER. THE US HAS MADE NO FINAL DECISIONS AND COULD DO NOTHING FOR PAKISTAN UNTIL THE REPROCESSING ISSUE IS RESOLVED.

3. IN RESPONSE TO A REQUEST FOR HIS VIEWS, THE PRIME MINISTER STRESSED THAT INDIA WISHES TO SEE COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN, AND INDIA. HE AND THE SHAH SEE THESE THREE COUNTRIES PLUS IRAN AS KEY TO REGIONAL STABILITY. INDIA'S RELATIONS WITH IRAN AND AFGHANISTAN ARE GOOD. WHILE THE NEW AFGHAN LEADERS FOLLOW A COMMUNIST PHILOSOPHY, HE DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT THE APRIL COUP WAS SOVIET INSPIRED. (NEWSOM COMMENTED THAT THE US HAD REACHED THE SAME CONCLUSION ON AFGHANISTAN, IS KEEPING AN OPEN MIND AND WILL CONSIDER FURTHER AID PROGRAMS.) BECAUSE OF ITS NATIONALISTIC TRADITION AND ISLAMIC ROOTS, AFGHANISTAN IS NOT LIKELY TO COME UNDER FOREIGN DOMINATION. ALTHOUGH INDIA IS NOT APPREHENSIVE ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN, IT IS STILL PRUDENT TO BE CAREFUL AND
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NOT UNSUSPECTING. (NEWSOM NOTED THAT THE SHAH IS ALSO KEEPING AN OPEN MIND ON AFGHANISTAN)

4. ON PAKISTAN, THE PRIME MINISTER NOTED THAT THE AFGHAN COUP HAS MADE THE GOP APPREHENSIVE AND FEARFUL THAT THE DRA WILL CAUSE PROBLEMS ALONG THE PAK-AFGHAN BORDER, INTERFERENCE WHICH HE PERSONALLY DOES NOT EXPECT. THE PRIME MINISTER TOLD THE UNDER SECRETARY THAT HE COULD BE HELPFUL IN PAKISTAN BY GUARANTEEING THE GOP OF INDIA'S GOOD INTENTIONS. INDIA WILL NOT INTERFERE IN PAKISTAN'S AFFAIRS AND WILL GIVE PAKISTAN NO CAUSE FOR COMPLAINT AGAINST INDIA. HE CITED HIS REFUSAL TO SAY ANYTHING ABOUT THE BHUTTO CASE. BECAUSE INDIA IS THE BIGGER STATE, INDIA HAS A DUTY NOT TO INTERFERE WITH PAKISTAN. INDIA CAN ONLY HELP PAKISTAN IF THE LATTER ASKS; TO OFFER ASSISTANCE WOULD ONLY MAKE PAKISTAN SUSPICIOUS OF INDIA'S INTENTIONS. INDIA IS PREPARED TO PROVIDE FOOD TO PAKISTAN IF IT ASKS DIRECTLY. HE NOTED THAT INTERNAL CONDITIONS MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR THE GOP TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH INDIA; THE GOP IS FEARFUL OF STRONG DOMESTIC FEELINGS IN PAKISTAN AGAINST INDIA. HOWEVER, INDIA WILL CONTINUE TO BEHAVE IN A FRIENDLY MANNER TOWARD PAKISTAN, AND HOPES PAKISTAN

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 NEW DELHI 10721

EXDIS HANDLE AS NODIS

WILL EVENTUALLY BE CONVINCED OF INDIA'S SINCERITY. INDIA
SEEKS COMPLETE FREEDOM OF ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN.
HE SUPPORTS THE KIND OF STEPS THE SHAH WOULD LIKE TO SEE DEV-
ELOPED IN TRANSIT TRADE AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION AMONG THE
COUNTRIES OF THE REGION BUT DOES NOT BELIEVE PAKISTANI ACCEP-
TANCE IS LIKELY. HE REFERRED TO PAKISTAN'S INSISTENCE ON
GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT TRADE.

5. AMBASSADOR GOHEEN EXPRESSED RESPECT OF USG FOR INDIA'S
DETERMINATION NOT TO DEVELOP NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVES. PAKISTAN
DOES NOT HAVE THE SAME CONFIDENCE WHICH INDIA HAS SHOWN IN
FORESWEARING NUCLEAR WEAPONS. HE ASKED WHETHER A BILATERAL
AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES ON THIS SUBJECT WAS POS-
SIBLE. THE PRIME MINISTER SAID INDIA HAS ALREADY FIRMLY DE-
CLARED ITS NUCLEAR POLICY, INCLUDING BEFORE THE UNITED NATIONS.
IF PAKISTAN MAKES A SIMILAR DECLARATION, HE WILL IMMEDIATELY
WELCOME IT BUT INDIA CANNOT PRESSURE PAKISTAN INTO DOING SO.
RUMORS THAT INDIA IS WORKING WITH FRANCE AGAINST THE REPRO-
CESSING PLANT ARE UNTRUE AND THE SUBJECT WAS NOT DISCUSSED
DURING HIS MEETING WITH THE FRENCH PRESIDENT. THE PRIME MIN-
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ISTER ASKED HOWEVER, WHETHER IT WAS NOT UNFAIR FOR INDIA TO SIGN NUCLEAR TREATIES (PRESUMABLY THE NPT AND CTB) IF PAKISTAN DID NOT.

6. THE PRIME MINISTER CONTINUED BY DESCRIBING PAKISTAN AS ADVENTUROUS BY NATURE, AS INDIA HAS TWICE FOUND OUT, BUT HE IS NOT WORRIED ABOUT THREATS TO INDIA FROM PAKISTAN. INDIA IS STRONG MILITARILY. HOWEVER, PAKISTAN IS ABLE TO CONCENTRATE ITS FORCES IN ONE AREA WHILE INDIA MUST DEFEND TWO BORDERS; THEREFORE THE MILITARY BALANCE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES IS PRECARIOUS. SHANKAR ADDED THAT INDIAN PUBLIC OPINION HAS BEEN DISTURBED BY INCREASES BY PAKISTAN IN THE NUMBER OF ITS AIR-CRAFT AND DIVISIONS SINCE THE 1971 WAR, AND HE IS NOT SURE HOW INDIAN PUBLIC OPINION WILL REGARD RESUMPTION OF US ARMS SUPPLY TO PAKISTAN. IN CONCLUDING THE DISCUSSION OF PAKISTAN, THE PRIME MINISTER INDICATED HIS UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT THE US MIGHT DO TO ASSIST PAKISTAN IF THE REPROCESSING ISSUE CAN BE OVERCOME.

7. REGARDING FUEL SHIPMENTS FOR THE TARAPUR NUCLEAR REACTOR, NEWSOM STATED THAT WE EXPECTED A RESOLUTION AGAINST THE PRESENT SHIPMENT TO BE DEFEATED IN THE HOUSE TODAY. THE SECOND SHIPMENT WILL BE CONSIDERED BY THE NRC WHEN THE FIFTH COMMISSIONER IS IN PLACE, PROBABLY WITHIN SEVERAL WEEKS.

8. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION BY NEWSOM, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT INDIA WOULD BE PREPARED TO CONTRIBUTE TROOPS TO UN FORCES IN BOTH NAMIBIA AND ZIMBABEW.

9. NEWSOM RAISED QUESTION OF WHETHER INDIA SAW THE POSSIBILITY OF A HUMAN RIGHTS INITIATIVE WITHIN A U.N. CONTEXT. IN REPLY, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HE BELIEVED THE WEST MUST BE CAUTIOUS IN SEEKING CHANGE IN COMMUNIST STATES. IMPROVED EAST-SECRET

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WEST RELATIONS AND PROGRESS IN DISARMAMENT COULD BE JEOPARDIZED BY OVERZEALOUSNESS. INDIA ADHERES TO THE PRINCIPLE THAT EVERY COUNTRY SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO DETERMINE ITS OWN FORM OF GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL SYSTEM. NEWSOM COMMENTED THAT THERE APPEARED TO BE A PHILOSOPHICAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US AND INDIA OVER HOW TO GO ABOUT IMPROVING INTERNATIONAL RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. INDIA APPARENTLY BELIEVES DEMOCRATIC COUNTRIES CAN BEST IMPROVE HUMAN RIGHTS BY THEIR OWN EXAMPLE BUT THAT IT IS DIFFICULT TO INSTITUTIONALIZE HUMAN RIGHTS IMPROVEMENTS THROUGH THE UN. THE U.S. FELT THAT CONTINUED INTERNATIONAL PRESSURES COULD BE HELPFUL. DESAI AGREED WITH THIS ANALYSIS.

10. MEETING CONCLUDED WITH NEWSOM STATING THAT THE US WOULD CONTINUE TO KEEP INDIA INFORMED OF ITS POLICIES IN THE REGION

AND THAT HE WOULD ADVISE THE PRIME MINISTER THROUGH AMBASSADOR GOHEEN OF THE RESULTS OF HIS PRESENT TRIP.

11. IN BRIEF CALL ON SECRETARY SHANKAR PRIOR TO MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER, NUCLEAR SUBJECTS WERE DISCUSSED. NEWSOM SAID WE EXPECT TARAPUR FUEL SHIPMENT TO MOVE FORWARD VERY SOON AND NEXT SHIPMENT TO COME BEFORE NRC AS SOON AS FIFTH COMMISSIONER SWORN IN. IN ANSWER TO NEWSOM QUESTION, SHANKAR SAID HE THOUGHT PRIME MINISTER HAD ALREADY MADE A PUBLIC STATEMENT REGARDING INDIAN ADHERENCE TO A NON-DISCRIMINATORY CTB, AS DESAI TOLD PRESIDENT CARTER AND US SENATORS HE WOULD DO. HE WOULD CHECK AND GET BACK TO AMBASSADOR GOHEEN. IF A STATEMENT HAS NOT BEEN MADE THE PRIME MINISTER COULD EASILY DO SO IN THE PARLIAMENT. SHANKAR ALSO SAID INDIANS ARE AGREEABLE TO HOLDING FURTHER TECHNICAL TALKS; HE INDICATED NO PREFERENCE FOR TIMING OR LOCALE OF TALKS.
GOHEEN

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